



# Leadership seminar enhances Afghan Army capabilities

Story by U.S. Army Lt. Col. Frederick Rice  
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**KABUL, Afghanistan**—More than 60 senior leaders from the Afghan National Army and Ministry of Defense participated in a three-day leadership seminar held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Aug. 1 through 3.

Designed to enhance the leadership capabilities of Afghanistan's senior military leaders, the seminar was the fourth in a series sponsored by the Office of Security Cooperation-Afghanistan and presented by MPRI, the private professional services company that works with OSC-A to mentor the top leaders within the Afghan Defense Ministry. Previous seminars focused on decision making, strategic planning and force management.

The MPRI seminar series is part of the continuing mentorship of the Afghan Army's leadership. It serves to focus senior ANA and Defense Ministry leaders on topics that are



Courtesy Photo by Daniel Challis

**Maj. Gen. Aljah Baz Jawhary, the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Minister at the Afghan Ministry of Defense, leads a discussion during one of the leadership seminar small group exercises.**

critical to the continuing development of Afghanistan's military.

"This seminar is only one step in creating a new generation of competent, confident leaders for the ANA," said retired U.S. Army Gen. Carl Vuono, president of MPRI. "Competent, responsible and committed leaders are the heart and soul of the organization and are the

engine that drives the entire structure of national security."

Abdul Rahim Wardak, the Afghan Minister of Defense, officially opened the first day's session by highlighting the significance of the seminar's topic.

"Leadership is the most important

element when it comes to training our army," said Wardak. "We require effective leaders to be successful."

Commanders, command sergeants major and chiefs of staff of the ANA's five regional corps as well as senior members of the Afghan Army's General Staff and intermediate-level commands participated in the seminar. More than 30 civilian and military mentors from MPRI and OSC-A also participated.

"Leaders are the keystone to the effectiveness of the ANA, and therefore to the security of the nation," said Vuono, whose successful military career culminated with service as the chief of staff of the U.S. Army.

Vuono also provided the Afghan leaders with an overview of his own leadership experiences, highlighting such important themes as ethics, duty, enforcing standards and dealing with challenges.



Photo by U.S. Army Lt. Col. Frederick Rice

**Prior to the start of the seminar, from left, Brig. Gen. Shir Zazai, Brig. Gen. Amin Nassib and Maj. Gen. Ahmad Zai Yaftali review the day's schedule. More than 60 senior ANA leaders attended the three-day leadership seminar.**

The seminar was presented in eight sections. Four of the sections consisted of presentations on different aspects of senior-level leadership including individual leadership, organizational leadership and leader development.

The remaining sessions involved small group exercises that focused on how to manage real-world leadership challenges in four functional areas: operations and training, logistics accountability, special staff roles and personnel management. Each group was facilitated by two mentors from MPRI with the assistance of translators.

The small group sessions offered the Afghan leaders a unique




opportunity to share their personal military experiences as they applied lessons learned during the seminar to solve complex leadership issues.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. John Brennan, chief of OSC-A, said he was pleased with what the ANA's senior leaders accomplished during the seminar. He said they addressed many important issues that impact

the future of their army and thus, the future of Afghanistan.

"The people of Afghanistan recognize and respect the importance of having a truly national army that is committed to putting national interests over self interests," said Brennan. "Leaders must remain true to this principle and maintain that respect."

Dick Gerding, program manager for MPRI's operations in Afghanistan, said by the end of the seminar the senior ANA leaders had developed a new appreciation for, and understanding of, the challenges involved with leading their army.

"More importantly," said Gerding, "they also learned how to effectively deal with those challenges." 



Photos by U.S. Army Lt. Col. Frederick Rice

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From left, Gen. Bismullah Khan, chief of the ANA General Staff, Dr. A. Yusuf Nuristani, first deputy minister of Defense, and Abdul Rahim Wardak, minister of Defense, participate in the MPRI leadership seminar sponsored by OSC-A.

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MPRI President and former  
U.S. Army Chief of Staff*

Retired U.S. Army Gen. Carl Vuono, president of MPRI, presents an overview of his personal leadership experiences during the first day of the seminar. Vuono's 34-year military career culminated with service as the U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

